



HENRY KOERNER HALL

Bard College Berlin
A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

FESTIVE OPENING HENRY KOERNER HALL

MAY 14, 2019
BARD COLLEGE BERLIN



BARD COLLEGE IN GERMANY AND THE WORLD

The opening of Henry Koerner Hall is a fitting moment, as we give our profound thanks to those who made it possible, to remind ourselves why what Bard is doing here is so important.

Henry Koerner Hall is a student residence. This is critical. Bard College Berlin – unusually for Europe – is a residential college. All first-year and many second-year students, as well as exchange students, live on campus. The elegant building we celebrate today, with its shared multi-level student apartments, its large-windowed façade and its nearness to social spaces such as the Cafeteria and the Factory, is specifically designed to foster the kind of intensive, deeply thoughtful conversations and encounters that change lives and can change the world.

Berlin, today, is the most dynamic space in Europe. Being in Berlin makes it easier to bring transnational awareness to the interdisciplinary study of social, political, economic and artistic traditions and their transformation. Our Berlin location has helped attract a student body of 270 that comes from 60 countries, including the 32 current students who are forced migrants or come from conflict-ridden countries, and who attend Bard College Berlin with a full four-year scholarship thanks to a remarkable Berlin-based initiative called the Program of International Education and Social Change, which is funded solely by private and institutional philanthropy.

At Bard, we are committed to the transformative power of liberal arts and sciences education. We practice this commitment on our home campus in Annandale, New York. And we do it – among other places – in six American prisons where incarcerated individuals take fully accredited



courses and can earn a Bard College Bachelor's degree; at eight Bard High School Early Colleges and Early College Centers serving bright, underserved populations in five U.S. states; and in Bard's ambitious dual degree liberal arts Bachelor's and Master's programs in Russia, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, and Germany. In these ways, we hope the college itself serves as an exemplar of the civic engagement we wish to see in our graduates.

All Bard students, in Berlin and on our other network campuses, receive a world-class education in the classical liberal arts and sciences. The Berlin curriculum is especially rich in philosophy, social sciences, humanities and arts – notably including the practicing arts. Centrally, Bard also asks all its students to grapple with the “big questions” and serious problems humanity must now solve.

With Bard's encouragement, our students engage in myriad ways with the life of the places in which they live. They learn from these experiences and from each other – and we learn from them. Many of our students have already demonstrated their leadership and made major contributions, including, incredibly, the founding of Berlin's first Arabic-language library, started by a Syrian student before he enrolled at Bard College Berlin.

Our current and future graduates will surely look back with gratitude to those individuals who help us realize our mission. On their behalf and on behalf of Bard College, I would like to thank our generous donors, first of all, the Arcadia Fund, led by our valued Board Member Peter Baldwin and his wife Lisbet Rausing, who have made this building possible. We thank them for their generosity and their commitment to what Bard stands for.

Leon Botstein, President of Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, March 2019



STUDENT RESIDENCES AT BARD COLLEGE BERLIN

Two reasons made the creation of Henry Koerner Hall, the new student residence of Bard College Berlin, a project of great interest for Atelier Kempe Thill. First, as an architecture firm, we are fascinated by educational buildings and their role in the urban fabric. Throughout Europe, we have been extensively engaged in the creation of university buildings and student housing. A recurring motif in this context is the integration of contemporary university buildings into the urban environment. Few universities opt to blend into the urban fabric and thereby to enhance the programmatic mix of the city. Today, much like in the 1970s, the exact opposite model – a functionally isolated campus located in the periphery and poorly accessible by public transport – is often preferred and justified by the alleged logistical impossibility of realizing such a program within the city proper.

With this in mind, Bard College Berlin's strategy of integrating in the urban structure is remarkable. At first glance, the college's modest investment capacity and its existing building stock may seem to make any such attempt rather unpractical. A closer look, however, suggests a desire to fit in with the open building structure of the area and to adapt to the neighborhood and its inhabitants. This commitment to the city is nothing if not praiseworthy.



The second reason for our special interest in this project lies in our concern with affordable housing construction. Especially in Germany, where absurdly rigid building standards have led to a disproportional increase in building costs, the question arises how good residential architecture can be created at all. Therefore, we are very pleased to have found in Bard College Berlin a client who appreciates that a duplex structure allows for connecting and communicative spaces with double ceiling height and that the use of large glass-panels renders smaller living spaces more generous and beautiful. All this was realized with a limited budget and guided by the clear vision of Bard College Berlin. It would be entirely fitting for the public authorities to acknowledge and support this extraordinary engagement.

André Kempe, Co-founder & Partner, Atelier Kempe Thill
Rotterdam, April 2019

HENRY KOERNER



Henry Koerner was born in 1915 to Jewish parents in Vienna. The younger of two sons, Henry attended a Realschule, where he excelled in drawing and geometry. His brother Kurt joined the Communist youth movement and enlisted Henry in making posters for the cause. In 1934, Koerner enrolled in Vienna's School of Design, and on graduation he found employment in the studio of one of Austria's leading poster artists, Victor Theodor Slama. In March 1938, Hitler marched into Vienna, and in September Koerner managed to flee Austria. His parents, brother, and nearly all of his relatives were deported and murdered in Nazi death camps.

Arriving in New York in April 1939, Koerner worked as a commercial artist. In 1942 two of his posters won first prizes in the Museum of Modern Art's National War Poster Competition. This led to his employment in the newly-founded U.S. Office of War Information, where he worked side-by-side with major American artists, including Ben Shahn, who would influence his style. In 1944 he enlisted in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but was transferred to the Office of Strategic Services. While making several of the most iconic U.S. war posters, he began to paint, creating as his Opus One a portrait of his parents at home in their apartment in Vienna. Shipped to London, he made hundreds of pen-and-ink life drawings of military and civilian life. After the Allied victory, he traveled in the entourage of General Lucius D. Clay to Wiesbaden, then on to Nuremberg and Berlin. As an official sketch artist at the Nuremberg Trials, he portrayed (in his words) "the murderers of millions of Jews and my parents," an experience that impacted his artistic calling.



Henry Koerner with exhibition visitors, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin 1947

In 1946 Koerner returned to ruined Vienna to learn the facts of his family's deportations. Shattered by the experience, he painted a memorial in the form of a painting of his parents walking on separate paths in the Vienna Woods. Discharged from the Army, he joined the Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS) in Berlin. While designing informational material for the American occupation, he created a significant group of paintings based on life sketches and snapshots. These works were exhibited to great international acclaim in a solo show in 1947 at the Haus am Waldsee (then the Kulturstadt of the American sector in Berlin-Zehlendorf). The first exhibit of American art in Germany after the war, the show was unique in explicitly addressing the Holocaust.

On his return to the U.S. Koerner's work was widely exhibited and praised, but with the ascendancy of Abstract Expressionism, figurative painting fell rapidly out of favor. Disillusioned by the New York art scene and fascinated by Pittsburgh, which he experienced as a sort of American Vienna, he accepted an artist-in-residence position at Pennsylvania College for Women. There he met his American-born wife, Joan Frasher, an aspiring violinist. From 1955-1967 he also painted—all from life—almost fifty portrait covers for *TIME Magazine* while also creating a massive and highly personal oeuvre. In 1991 Koerner died from a hit-and-run accident near Aggstein, along the Danube River. In 1997 the Austrian National Gallery honored him with a retrospective exhibition. His paintings hang in many of America's major museums.

Joseph Koerner, Victor S. Thomas Professor of the
History of Art and Architecture,
Cambridge Massachusetts, April 2019

SPEAKERS



Sören Benn is the district mayor of Pankow. He is the father of three children and trained as a construction worker, actor, and social pedagogue. He has been a member of the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) since 2000 and district chairman of Die Linke (The Left) in Pankow since 2008. Benn held several functions with the District Assembly of Representatives and was part of the Economy & Transport division of Die Linke in the House of Representatives.

Tracey Emin is a British artist who is known for her frank, confessional style and transforming her inner world into intimate works of art. In 2007 she represented Britain at the 52nd Venice Biennale and was made a Royal Academician. Emin has been the Royal Academy's Professor of Drawing since 2011. In 2012 Queen Elizabeth II appointed her Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her contributions to the visual arts.

Sigmar Gabriel is a Member of the German Bundestag who was Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2017 to 2018 and Vice-Chancellor of Germany from 2013 to 2018. He was Leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) from 2009 to 2017. He was the Federal Minister of the Environment from 2005 to 2009 and the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy from 2013 to 2017. From 1999 to 2003 Gabriel was Prime Minister of Lower Saxony.



Students in a shared double room on the Bard College Berlin campus

Barbara Haskell is a long-time curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, a well-known scholar on American modern art, and author of over thirty publications. Among the landmark thematic exhibitions she has curated are *The American Century: Art & Culture 1900–1950* (1999) and *BLAM! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism and Performance 1958–1964* (1984). In addition, she has curated retrospectives and authored accompanying scholarly monographs on a range of early-twentieth-century and post-war American artists.

Alfredo Jaar is an artist, architect, and filmmaker who lives and works in New York. His work has been shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Biennales of Venice (1986, 2007, 2009, 2013), São Paulo (1987, 1989, 2010), as well as Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002). Over sixty monographic publications have been published about his work. A Guggenheim and MacArthur fellow, he received the Hiroshima Art Prize in 2018.

André Kempe studied at the TU Dresden and in 2000 founded Atelier Kempe Thill (AKT) together with Oliver Thill in Rotterdam. AKT has won international awards and focuses on public building projects in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, and Morocco. André Kempe was a guest professor at several institutions and is currently teaching at the TU Berlin. He is a member of the board of European NL. In 2012 HatjeCantz published the first monograph about AKP.



Joseph Leo Koerner is the Victor S. Thomas Professor of the History of Art and Architecture and Senior Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Harvard University. He is author, most recently, of *Bosch and Bruegel: From Enemy Painting to Everyday Life* (2016). Koerner has written and presented several arts documentaries for the BBC, and directed and produced *The Burning Child*, a feature film on Vienna to be released later this year.

Orwa Nyrabia is the Artistic Director of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam. He co-founded one of the first independent production companies in Syria and set up DOX BOX, the Arab region's leading documentary festival. In 2013 Nyrabia moved to Germany where he continued to produce international projects, tutor filmmakers, and serve as a juror for film funds and festivals. His work earned many awards including the Grierson, George Polk, Katrin Cartlidge, and Sundance Grand Jury Award.



View of the Bard College Berlin campus from Platanenstrasse

THANK YOU

We would like to thank Arcadia, A charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, for making the construction of Henry Koerner Hall possible. A strong belief in the value of a liberal arts education and the need to foster critical thinking, creativity, and social engagement in future generations led to this gift. We are deeply grateful for their support of the mission of Bard College Berlin.

We would also like to thank the many individuals who have expressed their appreciation of our educational vision, by supporting us financially and in kind – from the donors to the college and our PIESC program, to the friends who strengthen our institution with their advice, network, and commitment.

Finally, our gratitude goes to everyone who has helped to ensure the success of this important day, in particular the Katholische Kirchengemeinde St. Georg Berlin.

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